

FREEDOM

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EU: IS IT BOON, OR BUST?

After years of harmonising workers' rights and privatisation policy by the EU, union groups are warning that new legal and policy plans could herald the start of a wholesale attack on conditions.

The Unite union is pointing in particular to three recent court cases which they say are potentially hugely damaging to union organisation, giving employers a "licence for social dumping".

It points to three legal fights which have recently gone through the European Court of Justice, known as the Viking, Lafal and Ruffert cases, all of which have been won by employers.

In the Viking case, the ECJ found it was legal for a ship to be reflagged to Estonia from Finland – allowing the company to take advantage of lower working wages in the Eastern European country and potentially allowing other shipping companies to take advantage of the same loophole.

Laval meanwhile, which was covered by *Freedom* earlier this year, saw a ban on regional living wages being imposed in Lower Saxony after it was found this was making it difficult for contractors from other countries to undercut local companies for public sector work.

Finally the Ruffert decision could see procurement contracts exempted from having to adhere to collective bargaining agreements

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LENS CAP HUNGARY



Police reorganise after deploying teargas and water cannons against radical right-wing demonstrators. Several hundred members and sympathisers of the right-wing 'movement of the 64 Burgkomitate' were present at the city centre in a counter-demonstration to protests against attacks on gay pride demonstrations and racism towards Roma minorities. The movement of 'Burgkomitate' refers to their names on Hungary's territorial size before the territory lost after the First World War, when the country still had 64 counties.

RMT REP 'STITCHED UP' SAY UNION

The RMT rail union is fighting a disciplinary process against one of their members, RMT health and safety/union rep Andy Littlechild.

Andy has been a rep at MRIS (Metronet Rail Infrastructure Services, formerly TrackForce) for 12 years, where he is known for his complete dedication to the health, safety and welfare of all workers – Metronet employee's and agency staff alike.

He is also known for his union activity across Metronet as a company, and was instrumental in the RMT's recent successful campaigns in September last year which stopped management from devaluing Metronet staff pensions by 10% and halted mass job cuts.

For two years Andy has been attempting to bring his department (MRIS) into compliance

with Metronet company policy regarding the wearing of PPE on site, based on risk assessment, through the established company health and safety procedures. However, MRIS local management have chosen to repeatedly ignore clear instructions to comply with Metronet PPE policy from even their own senior managers.

They intentionally sidelined him as an health and safety rep from a meeting that produced a 'bespoke' risk assessment for the job he was working on; adding in the wearing of hard hats which he objected to in writing, stating he wouldn't work to it accordingly. Next a management 'audit' was carried out on site, and Andy was stood down from duty and removed from site.

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

BENEFITS: The London Coalition Against Poverty have been fighting Dalston council this month for improvements to the treatment of clients at the local job centre. They said: "We centred our demands around four main points. We asked that documents needed to assess benefits claims are photocopied by the Jobcentre themselves and the claimant to be given a receipt. We demanded that claimants are able to freely use the telephones situated in the Jobcentre to call up the central benefits department in order to enquire about their benefits and to make job enquiries. We demanded that staff facilitate and be helpful to people with problems with their claim. And finally, for people to be treated with courtesy and decency at all times."

EDUCATION: The Alliance Against Birmingham Academies group has congratulated Harborne Hill School after its governing board voted to ditch plans to allow Absolute Return for Kids (ARK), the controversial sponsors of the proposed Harborne Academy, from taking over their school. The governing body unanimously voted to stop ARK after it emerged that they were intent on destroying vital educational ties with local partnerships and organisations built up over years by the school.

EDUCATION: The University and College Union (UCU) branch at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is balloting its members on strike action following the formal de-recognition of the local UCU branch by university managers. The NTU managers formally de-recognised the UCU's branch after ongoing attempts by the university to amend the union's recognition agreement with the university. The strike action ballot opened on the 8th September and will close 29th September.

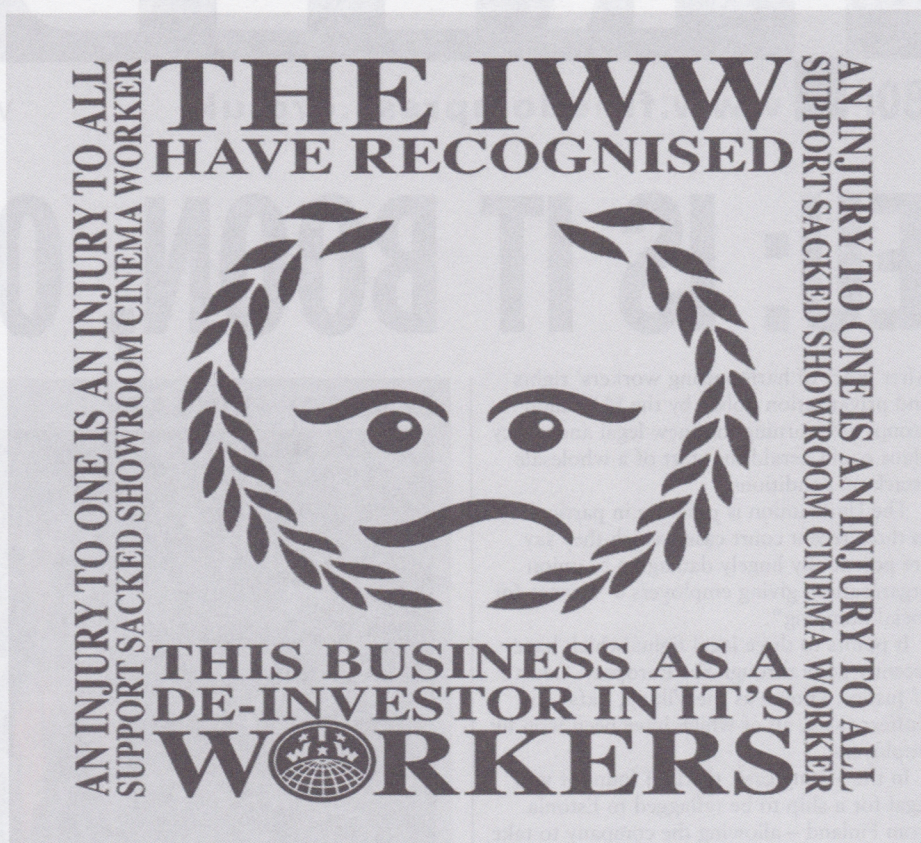
EMERGENCY SERVICES: A row has blown up in Tayside after the fire service chiefs and the Fire Brigades Union clashed over plans to end 24-hour cover at Balmossie, using retained firefighters to cover night shifts. The union says the move would significantly increase the risk of fatalities.

IMMIGRATION: A 36-year-old from Ghana died following raid by police and immigration. Frank Odame was found with head injuries below a block of flats. A post mortem gave the cause of death as head and chest injuries.

Mr Odame fell from the window of his second-floor home.

SURVEILLANCE: A new database built from CCTV camera footage could track millions of car journeys, and hold them for up to five years. The police are to expand a car surveillance operation to take advantage of the national network of roadside cameras to reconstruct journeys. The project relies on automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras pinpointing the precise time and location of all vehicles on the road.

LENS CAP IWW



The Industrial Workers of the World declared the Showroom Cinema a 'de-investor' in its workers after senior management fired bar worker Chris Lockwood for his membership of a union. The declaration mocks the 'investor in people' initiative which supposedly rewards companies who show caring for their employees. The union have asked supporters to boycott the Showroom Cinema and send protests to management until the reinstatement of Chris Lockwood.

Bristol bookfair a blast

Bristol's first anarchist bookfair for 15 years was a vibrant event.

Organisers estimate that at least 350 people passed through the bookfair during the day. Workshops were well attended and thought-provoking, stalls remained busy throughout the day, some stallholders and others complained it was too hot inside – and it wasn't just the level of political debate they were talking about – the sun shone at last and meant the car park became a useful picnic and socialising area.

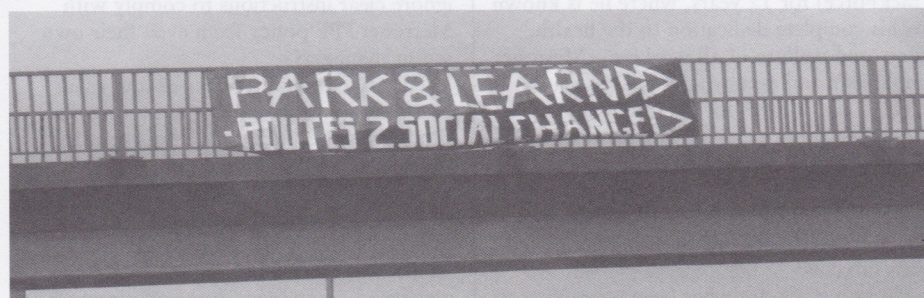
The café at the Kebele social radical social centre provided excellent vegan food, and at

the end many went off to party at the two bookfair socials. New friends and contacts were made, and old friendships and networks strengthened.

Financially the bookfair more than covered its costs with benefit gigs, donations and a door collection on the day. Many thanks to all those who participated in the event and ensured it was a very worthwhile day. The bookfair collective will now consider possible follow-up events.

BaB collective

Contact bristolanarchistbookfair@riseup.net for more information.



DIRECTIONS: A banner on the M32 motorway bridge points the way to Bristol's bookfair



Overcrowding in prisons

Prison crowds due to longer sentencing

More information has come to light about the future for prisons in the UK, with new estimates for prison population, composition and likely future ownership being brought out recently.

A newly-published report by the ministry of justice has found that the prison population is likely to reach around 96,000 in 2015 if current trends continue – up 40,000 from 1997's figures. It found that far from general belief, the number of people being successfully prosecuted was not the primary reason for the rise in prisoners. The report notes: "Custody rates and average custodial sentences increased significantly between 1997 and 2004. Over the same period, the numbers of offenders sentenced for indictable offences remained relatively constant."

Judges handing down lengthier sentences has

been the primary reason for the overcrowding.

The report comes as prison reform group Nacro pushes forwards with plans to turn itself into the first non-profit organisation to take on the building and running of new prisons to cope with this increased population – in conjunction with a notorious security company.

Nacro, the largest third-sector group involved in the prison system, has specialised in campaigning for education and rehabilitation courses within the system, and had in recent years become a major player in post-incarceration training schemes. In its three-year plan, it states that it intends to "grow our portfolio of services – working in partnership where this benefits our service users," leading to its decision earlier this month to build and run two 600-bed prisons alongside Group 4.

Group 4 has had numerous problems in its facilities, in particular as the company which ran Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre. The organisation has been heavily criticised

for its handling of incarceration.

Nacro's involvement in the new wave of PFI facilities has wrongfooted campaigners who have pointed to evidence that private sector involvement leads to poorer services.

In the most recent report on prison conditions, it was found that while 86% of public-run prisons were rated at the top levels of three or four for quality, only 80% of private sector buildings could say the same.

Nacro has historically been a proponent of less prisons, more rehabilitation. However this new move could see it pick up lucrative revenue streams from service provision, reflecting similar shifts from lobbying to resource allocation in other areas of government such as housing and claimant support.

- In related news, it has been claimed that up to 8,500 former members of the armed forces are serving sentences in UK prisons. Post-service trauma, poor support services and mental health issues have played a major part in increasing the number of inmates.

EU: is it boom or bust?

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if these are better than the minimums laid down by the Posted Workers Directive.

These decisions are contrary to the ILO (International Labour Organisation) conventions on free collective bargaining to which the UK government is a signatory.

Beyond these three cases, the EU is also in the late stages of organising major changes through its "renewed social agenda".

The plan merges concepts such as the ability to carry over pensions to any country in the EU, with highly controversial tactics such as the implementation of EU-wide employee bargaining through the use of works councils, where unions get to represent workforces while getting access to company information.

Works councils have proven divisive in Europe for anarchist groups, acting as the basis for conflicts over representative unionism and removing power from the grassroots. After some initial enthusiasm for the idea, the councils have since proven unpopular, acting largely as talking shops.

Plans to extend the concept to smaller companies, and to make them effective across borders, has worried some unionists, who believe it could make organising over workplace issues even more difficult and bureaucratic.

Changes to competition law are also making it difficult for workers for Volkswagen in Germany to hold on to social gains won as part of their campaign for the 'VW' law, which

has seen unions retain strong influence and membership within the company, leading to some of the best working conditions in Europe.

The EU commission are attempting to force Germany to allow Porsche to buy out the company, effectively ending the VW law. Over 40,000 people demonstrated earlier this month against their actions at the VW headquarters in Lower Saxony.

German MEP Martin Schultz has attacked the direction being taken by the EU, saying: "Many people are afraid that Europe no longer guarantees social protection. Europe is governed by the right, and so is aiming in the wrong direction."

PUBLIC SECTOR

PPP back to normal running on tube

The Public Private Partnership (PPP) to maintain London's transport infrastructure is likely to cause another budget overrun in Transport for London (TfL)'s finances, according to a recent report.

Chris Bolt, an independent arbiter overseeing the expected costs of upgrading the ageing Underground network, has ruled that a fair budget would be £5.1bn and £5.5bn. This is £1bn to £1.4bn over TfL's estimate of £4.1bn. Even this amount is far less than the £7.2bn estimate of the private contractor, Tube Lines.

The Treasury has footed the bill for TfL when previous PPPs failed, as the Government had imposed those PPPs on TfL. It also imposed this PPP, despite objections and two lawsuits from TfL. But with the Treasury now short of cash, it unlikely to plug the resulting hole in TfL's budget.

So if the taxpayer won't be coughing up the money, who will? The London commuter will, possibly in the form of yet another delay for Crossrail.

Just as with Metronet, the contractor in the last PPP to maintain the Underground, Tube Lines has been criticised by Bolt for payments to taxpayers that are "high" and "potentially outside of market norms".

Freedom reported on Metronet going bankrupt last year, after a litany of cost and time overruns which led to large losses on the project, and forced the government to step in with bailout money as the infrastructure rebuilding work looked unlikely to continue.

The inefficiency or greed does not stop there. Tube Lines' estimates for a second contract period are similarly much higher



than TfL's estimates. It estimated £677m for track renewals during 2010–2017, against TfL's estimate of £364m, with line closures of 90 million customer hours, against TfL's estimate of 21 million customer hours.

Even though the differing estimates are a form of haggling contest over the final costs, TfL has budgeted for very close to its own estimates. This latest review means that London commuters will directly be suffering for a centrally-imposed experiment with public-private financing.

The only right thing would be for the government to end the contracts and abandon

its ruinous experiment with PPPs for London. But after so many failures of PPPs in the past, all of which have been paid for by the taxpayer, it would also be the only sensible thing to do.

The same sort of policy is at work here that allows large banks to make a profit when times are good, but bails them out for their mistakes when times are bad. This policy amounts to a systematic looting of the public, short-changing the taxpayer or the service user (in this case, the commuter), whilst leaving the private entities' pockets well-lined.

Laddieback

Industrial roundup

In Ireland another unwelcome feature of the '70s is making a come back – government pay freezes for public sector workers. The Irish government has secured an 11-month pay freeze under the terms of a 21-month deal signed with trades unions and employer groups. It comes as Ireland's budget deficit approaches the European Union limits under the stability and growth pact. This requires member states to keep their deficits below 3% of gross domestic product.

In Britain government borrowing is also soaring due to lower tax rates and higher spending. The latest figures show government debt growing by 70% compared to a year ago. It now stands at over £28 billion and is set to rise further, as is inflation which rose again last month.

When the state or capitalism screws up it is workers who pay in job losses and pay cuts. The total number of unemployed rose last month by 81,000 to 1.7 million. The last time

there was a bigger rise was in 1999. Jobs are being lost across the economy.

Following the takeover of HBos by Lloyds TSB up to 40,000 jobs could be lost. At the other end of the country up to 200 jobs are threatened at the University of Plymouth because of a cash crisis. Inverclyde council in Scotland is planning to sack 700 jobs to pay for a £10 million funding gap.

If jobs aren't under threat wages are. At the recent TUC Congress, public sector workers said that they are being forced to take second jobs, rely on credit cards, choose between heating and eating, and are unable to buy birthday presents for their children.

Workers are though fighting back. In London the bus workers, members of the union Unite, have been on strike in protest of a below inflation pay offer and attempts to equalise pay rates across London. Drivers working for different bus company's earn between £10 and £13 an hour. The union is

using the slogan – One City, One Industry, One Union.

Elsewhere maintenance workers at Royal Mail sites are to begin a three-day strike over 'draconian' attacks on working conditions, libcom.org reports. The strike, backed by the Communication Workers Union, will see over 800 employees of facilities management firm Romec walk out after delivering a 98% majority in a strike ballot. The staff are electronic security and buildings maintenance engineers. Romec has pushed through changes in attendance patterns which will see managers being given the ability to force work on unsociable hours and at weekends.

NUT members are being balloted to see if they back further industrial action following a one day strike last May but unions in local government have started talks with employers.

Richard Griffin

IN BRIEF

BANKING: The fallout from the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the fourth-largest US investment bank, could see as many as 5,000 people lose their jobs in London alone.

Lehman had incurred losses of billions of dollars in the US mortgage market after a series of risky investment practices blew up as part of the ongoing credit crunch.

MARITIME: Members of the Unite union work at the Port of Liverpool on gig boats are refusing to work in potentially hazardous conditions when the HMS Intrepid arrives in dock to be scrapped. Unite members are angry over the lack of consultation and Health and Safety protection for workers carried out by Peel Holdings to ensure the safe dismantling of the old navy vessel. Unite say we must ensure that all naval vessels are dismantled to the highest health, safety and environmental standards in order to protect our members safety.

MORTGAGES: A merger between Lloyds TSB and HBOS, the largest mortgage lender in the country, could lead to the loss of up to 40,000 more jobs and rising costs as the companies merge assets and exert monopoly muscle. Lloyds will buy rival HBOS for £12.2 billion.

TRANSPORT: The treatment of workers at XL has been condemned as "disgraceful" by the Unite union as several hundred cabin crew, engineers, baggage handlers and check-in staff face redundancy. Unite revealed that it had been discussing a pay claim for its members at the company just days ago, with no hint of the firm's plight.

XL Leisure's 2,500 employees have also been left without jobs, and collateral damage could account for many more.

TRANSPORT: The RMT union have accused South Eastern Trains of sabotaging emergency talks over industrial disputes involving 1,250 RMT members at the company, when it informed the union's negotiators that it intended to seek an injunction against strike action. The company announced its intention of resorting to the courts at the start of a meeting the union believed was intended to find a way forward on disputes over the company's intention to extend driver-only operation and over pay the pay of retail and engineering staff. Strike action on both disputes was due to start on 22nd September.

UTILITIES: Controversial energy company E.ON is planning to build a £4 billion nuclear power station beside the River Severn in Gloucestershire. The company has applied to National Grid for a connection which would allow it to build a 1,600 mega-watt nuclear station at Oldbury-on-Severn by the year 2020. National Grid has granted permission for the link to an existing site scheduled to be retired from service at the end of the year.

Schools 'like prisons'

A new study looking at schools under the PPP system in Scotland has concluded that they are 'like prisons'.

Schools built under PPP, which effectively see the government take lengthy mortgages from the private sector in exchange for long-term construction and maintenance contracts, were compared to schools built in the 1930s by the study.

Researchers at Edinburgh University have expressed major concerns over the design of playgrounds in particular, saying high fences and CCTV cameras make the buildings seem "like a prison courtyard".

Another issue raised was that the space was too open and noisy, with few quiet places for groups of pupils to congregate.

While the new school was regarded as relatively cheaply built at £20 million, lead researcher Dr Jane Brown found that there were numerous design flaws – such as a lack of corridor space so pupils could re-order their thoughts between lessons. There were also

ventilation problems and hot, stuffy classrooms, with pupils feeling ill at the end of the day.

Dr Jane presented the findings at the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. She said: "People who don't know anything about education are influencing some design now."

An older unnamed school had a variety of private spaces and a choice of playgrounds, but it, too, was monitored by cameras. Dr Brown added: "There seems to be evidence that we are now experiencing a new era of surveillance in our schools."

PPP schools have been controversial because of the often poor quality of their design.

Audit Scotland's report Improving the School Estate has warned that private funding initiatives see high maintenance charges which could leave non-PPP buildings crumbling as they slip down the maintenance priority list.



Parliament contractor strike

CWU members launched three days of strike action on 23rd September against Romec's attempt to impose Dickensian conditions with a picket of Parliament.

Workers employed at Portcullis House in Westminster picketed the building in protest at Romec's unilateral action to impose fixed shift work spans from Monday to Saturday with no unsocial hour's payment.

Attendance times are to be decided by local managers and refusal to abide by the new rules can lead to dismissal.

The company are also seeking to scrap current travel arrangements which would see paid working only commencing when an individual arrives at the site of the job. "This means some of our members are

having to leave home at two or three in the morning to get to the first job," said Steve Jones, an NEC member, who sees the action as a direct attack on the right of the union to negotiate on behalf of its members. "If the Romec management get away with this the union won't be able to negotiate. It is a direct attack on the union's right to effectively represent its members."

The Romec contract in Parliament involves maintenance, installation, dealing with faults, heating, lighting and air conditioning.

Michael Walker, who has worked in Parliament for seven years, believes that the new conditions will mean many members won't see their children during the week.

INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: The Newcastle Referees Association says they've been warned by NSW Country Rugby League that they will be banned from refereeing club matches next year if they referee in the Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout this coming October.

Michael Anderson, State Secretary of NSW Aboriginal Rugby League and Sports Inc., which is organising the event, was warned that "should they referee in the Rugby League Knockout carnival this coming October long weekend in Newcastle they will be banned from refereeing club matches in 2009."

Anderson added: "This type of dictatorship is an absolute shock. Considering the off field confrontations that occurred between the Aboriginal Nations Super League and the Country Rugby League in the past two years, I am not surprised. It seems that every effort by Aboriginal people trying to take their own initiatives and to do things for their own people independently of government approved programmes meets with stern opposition."

SPAIN: The 23rd September is a key date in the process of privatisation for Public Health that the Autonomous Region of Madrid is running. The chair of the CAM, Esperanza Aguirre, announced in his inaugural speech the building during this term of four new hospitals and more than 55 health centres, as well as the reform of several of the 'old' hospitals.

The heads of the Ministry of Health of the CAM explained "The new model construction, financing and maintenance of infrastructures Health Plan 2007-2011 of the Community of Madrid."

With the slogan "Learn the peculiarities of the new terms and conditions of the new administrative plan and take advantage of business opportunities for his company." The programme said that the meeting is aimed at "Construction firms, financial institutions, Project Finance, Engineering, Health Insurance, Business Services Hospitals, Health Facilities companies, law firms and consultants" and tries to motivate them by ensuring that the "Initial investment planned exceeds one billion euros."

WORLD: A new report from Amnesty International is using nine case studies to illustrate the devastating impact of arms trading around the world. *Blood at the Crossroads: making the case for a global arms trade treaty* was launched as UN member states prepare to meet in October to consider further steps to move towards negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty. Every year, more than 300,000 people are killed with conventional weapons. Millions more are injured, abused, forcibly displaced and bereaved as a result of armed violence. Many of the weapons used to commit these violations are sourced on the poorly regulated international arms market.

LENS CAP ROSSPORT



Solitaire, the pipe-laying ship at the heart of the recent struggle over Shell's planned off-shore platform at Rosport in Ireland, has left the area after weeks of direct action and protests. Shell has announced that the *Solitaire* will go to a British port for repair and assessment. The company has always claimed that it was not responding to pressure from protests against its plan to install an offshore section of production pipeline without any planning permission for the onshore section. Maura Harrington, who had gone on hunger strike over the *Solitaire's* presence, has now ended her action.

Gaza blockade is broken

Boats have broken the Israeli blockade of Gaza to bring much needed aid to the area. The ships *Free Gaza* and *Liberty* have now departed Gaza for Cyprus. Several Palestinians previously denied exit visas by Israel will join international human rights workers on the journey.

Among the Palestinians leaving are Saed Mosleh, age 10, of Beit Hanoun, Gaza. Saed lost his leg due to an Israeli tank shell and is leaving Gaza with his father to seek medical treatment. Also on board are the Darwish family, who will finally be reunited with their relatives in Cyprus. "I can't believe we're finally able to leave for medical treatment," said Khaled Mosleh, Saed's father. "This is a miracle of God."

Nine international human rights workers will remain in Gaza to do longer-term

monitoring and accompaniment, and one, Dr Bill Dienst of Omak, Washington, will attempt to cross over into Israel later today via the Erez crossing.

By freely traveling to Gaza on Saturday, 23rd August in two small wooden boats, the Free Gaza Movement forced the Israeli government to issue a fundamental policy change regarding their military and economic blockade of Gaza. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign affairs publicly announced that humanitarian and human rights missions to Gaza will no longer be stopped or threatened by Israel. With the end of the Israeli siege of Gaza, Palestinians should be free to exercise their rights without fear of being stopped or killed by the Israeli military.

(from indymedia.org)

Notes from the United States

In the first couple of weeks of September a clutch of major US commercial, insurance, real estate and investment firms either went under or were bought out by bigger ones. On one day alone in the middle of the month the Dow Jones index fell by 504 points, banks Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch (in existence for a century-and-a-half and almost a century, respectively) both effectively collapsed and several others seemed likely to follow.

Whichever statistic you take, there are

indications that some records are indeed being broken – in terms, at least, of largest drops, most dollars lost and most prestigious firms affected etc. Last month two of the country's largest mortgage companies, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, were bailed out by the government – ostensibly because the business they do affects so many and is so intricately tied into the national and global economies. In fact, though, the 'rescue' has more to do with making sure

Second general strike in India

Another nationwide general strike in India has affected West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura almost completely and other States partially with industrial establishments remaining closed across the country and the functioning of the public sector banks was hit at most places.

"The strike was spontaneous with eight core unions participating in it. It is an expression of deep indignation of the masses against the pernicious economic and labour policies of the United Progressive Alliance government," Gurudas Dasgupta, general secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress, told reporters.

The strike was against price rises, deepening and widening poverty, rising unemployment and a fall in real wages, in the face of an increasing Gross Domestic Product growth rate, increasing violation of the labour laws and outsourcing as well as privatisation.

About 250 Air Force personnel were deployed at 21 airports to maintain safety and fire services as the Airports Authority of India employees joined the strike. Air traffic was not affected, barring cancellation of flights to Kolkata.

The employees are also opposing further privatisation or leasing out the AAI airports, better pay and job security for those in the Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Nagpur airports.

Banking services and trade settlements were partially hit as bank employees affiliated to left-leaning unions and also supported the strike to protest merger of state-owned banks and outsourcing of non-core activities. Operations in about 40,000 branches were either fully or partially affected as employees went on strike.

"This should be a warning bell for the government because if it does not respond,



A Mumbai bank closed due to strike action by workers earlier this year

we will prolong this agitation. The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions will meet again in September first week to chalk out further course of action," Mr. Dasgupta said.

The unions say the strike affected industrial areas, banks, insurance, coal, power, steel, tea plantations, telecom, including information technology, and other sectors.

"The government should realise that all the friends of American President George Bush are gone and it should be ready to face the same fate if it tries to suppress the masses," Centre of Indian Trade Unions president M.K. Pandhe said. The trade union leaders claimed that life was significantly disrupted in Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Manipur and

Goa also while there was partial disruption in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Orissa and Karnataka.

Apart from the AITUC and CITU, the strike was supported by the Hind Mazdoor Sabha, the All India Council of Central Trade Unions, the All India United Trade Union Centre and the United Trade Union Centre, apart from all India federations of banks, insurance, railways, defence, telecom, airline and airports. The State and central government employees also extended their support.

An earlier strike in August saw ten million people out, mainly from the banking sector. (adapted from libcom.org)

Notes from the Unites States

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shareholders are happy and homeowners who 'defaulted' are squeezed until they pay.

Michael Hudson, President of the Institute for the Study of Long-Term Economic Trends, Distinguished Research Professor of Economics at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, and author of *Super-Imperialism: The Economic Strategy of American Empire* comments: "[this crisis] puts the class war back in business with a vengeance. Wall Street has been preparing for this for years, because every financial analyst knows that the debts can't be paid ... [I]f you're going to take a gamble on bad debts that can't be paid, how are you going to come out a winner? ... [M]ake the government bail you out. This has been known for years, because it's inherent almost in the mathematics of compound interest. Every banker I know knew that the loans they were making were going to go

bad. They were trying to sell them to somebody else ... to make it impossible to write down the debts of the four million homeowners that are expected to default this year ... you're having really a war now of creditors against debtors. And this is what Wall Street has been preparing for. It needed an emergency to do it. It's really not an emergency at all."

Then the US Federal Reserve struck a deal with the two remaining investment banks on Wall Street (Goldman Sachs and J P Morgan Chase) to put together a \$85 billion (£42bn) deal to save the large insurance company AIG (American International Group). Next, stocks of the 'High Street' bank Washington Mutual, once a byword for stability and reliability, were reclassified as 'junk' by the Standard and Poor index in the middle of September; few expect it to see the year out.

Louis Further

Police attack Afghans in Greece

On 8th of September three Afghan immigrant workers were attacked by port police in the harbour area of Patras, Greece. The reaction of the Afghan workers, to what is widely believed to be yet another act of retribution due to the active participation of Afghan immigrants in the No Borders protest march of the previous week, was immediate.

About 200 Afghan immigrants staged a protest next to the containers of gate-7, which the port police use illegally as detention cells for immigrants caught trying to get to Italy. When the port police special forces tried to move them, clashes broke out.

The immigrants were joined by local anarchist and libertarian groups, who gathered in front of the harbour gates. The ensuing clashes were severe and soon overwhelmed the police forces who failed to block the protesters' entrance to the harbour area. (adapted from libcom.org)

FEATURE

Cutting off Brighton's arms — a

Built out of the local anti-war movement which grew up over the Iraq conflict, the Smash EDO campaign in Brighton is one of the most high-profile and successful local attacks on arms manufacture in the country.

Beginning in 2004, a small group of campaigners set out to remove defence contractor EDO MBM from its holdings in Brighton, where it manufactures smart guidance and detonation systems for missiles used in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, through a campaign of non-violent direct action.

The initiative has cost arms group EDO MBM millions in lost working hours, legislative wrangles and hired security, culminating in the recent closure of one of the company's two Brighton facilities and its recent sale to ITT. It has also proven to be an ongoing thorn in the side of local police, with multiple attempted – and failed – prosecutions, and a series of attempts to close down media coverage, in particular Schnews documentary *On the Verge*, which has seen several venues threatened with legal action.

Speaking to *Freedom*, long-time campaigner Jane (a pseudonym) explained some of the achievements of the last four years: "Since the beginning of the campaign each time the factory is blockaded that's a few hundred thousand pounds that it costs them. There's been a lot of 'pixie' actions where people come along at night and break things and that has cost them a lot of money – air conditioning units got smashed up and they were clearly very expensive.

"Then there's a niggling campaign of locks getting superglued, windows smashed – they've had to spend a lot of money on security! They didn't used to have the big fence or as many CCTV cameras and guards. At times they've had a 24-hour guard depending on

the situation.

"The legal costs of running the injunction were over £1 million and that may not take into account the amount of time company employees had to spend on it. Then the court cases dragged managers and employees to court as well.

"One of the really major victories is that their second factory in Fishersgate in Brighton closed down while it was still owned by EDO. They were losing money as a whole and there were various signs that part of the decline was due to the campaign.

"There was a session where shareholders could phone in to the head of EDO and they were asking about how much were the legal costs in the UK, was it worth spending the money on it?"

Alongside money, there has been a very real human cost for EDO, as directors and staff have bailed out of the project in the face of consistent criticism from the campaign.

"There's a whole list of directors who have resigned, there's David Jones who was the old Managing Director, and there's at least five others who have gone over the past few years. We don't really know with the factory workers but there's definitely been a high turnover and there's a serious recruitment problem – the ones who are left are the hardcore."

Not even suppliers have managed to escape entirely unscathed from the experience, Jane explained: "They must have some difficulties with the people supplying them, we've had various campaigns, particularly recruitment agencies have dropped them, and each time working time is lost they must lose goodwill with their customers as well. Especially at the arms conferences where they hobnob with their mates from other companies, then there's specific anti-EDO demos which must sap goodwill."

However this success has come at a price, with core members in particular being singled out and repeatedly arrested, with charges such as assault being brought – though no convictions have ever been secured.

Most famously, an injunction brought by anti-activist lawyer Timothy Lawson-Crutenden saw EDO able to force protestors to the other side of the road – to a strip of grass barely four feet wide – from their site for a year, in what proved to be a dress-rehearsal for attempts to do the same thing at Heathrow in 2007 to stop the Climate Camp.

For a year, a dedicated band held their nerve while hundreds of injunctions were served by EDO's security and police hauled dozens of people away as the campaign gathered momentum.

The measure brought together the police and the company in ways which were to thoroughly embarrass the local force – to the point where charges were dropped



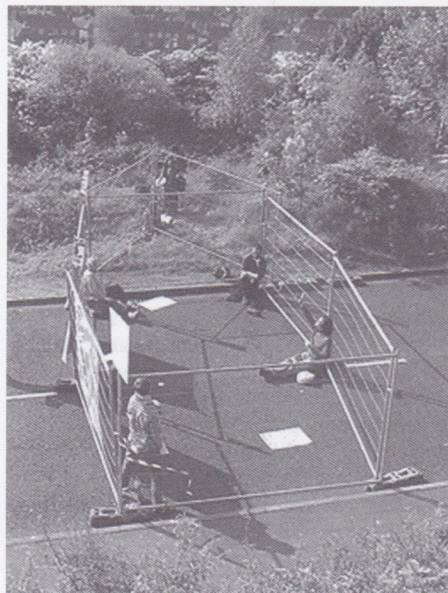
Above, the Carnival Against the Arms Trade march

against a number of protestors when their lawyer demanded recorded conversations between Brighton police and EDO as part of their cases.

In 2006 the tribunal was overturned, leaving EDO helpless to stop a new wave of demonstrations in which hundreds have sometimes participated – including a recent protest in which police were overwhelmed and marchers forced their way into the facility itself.

More recently, the police have been trawling any legal angle they can find to dissuade protestors. Having defeated complex injunctions, attempted charges for assault and high-tech opposition, the campaign has been running into trouble over a council bye-law aimed at curbing excessive noise.

Jane told *Freedom*: "There's noise demos every week and fairly often at the moment the police will threaten to arrest people for making too much noise. I think there's been four or five people arrested under it and it's a law that was apparently designed to deal with drunk people and buskers – it generally says that you have to stop if someone finds the amount of noise you're making too annoying.



In May 2004, activists blockaded EDO/MBM and six activists were arrested.

n interview with Smash EDO



es through Brighton in June 2008; below right, a karaoke demonstration

"Paul Hills [the current managing director of EDO in Brighton] is often the one that complains and then they can come and ask people to stop. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't, so sometimes they get arrested.

"In the court cases so far the council was asked if they originally saw the law being used in this way and they said that it wasn't and it wasn't what they meant by it. Even the wording doesn't really make sense and there's nothing written into it to take account of human rights law.

"One thing that was kind of criticised in terms of using human rights law though, it was pointed out in court that it's noise as opposed to expressing a political opinion. So there was a protest songs demo and people got anti-war songs and put them on a sound system – someone still got nicked!

"When he said they were anti-war songs the police said they couldn't hear the words."

Jane thinks policing in Brighton has changed significantly since the Smash EDO campaign got underway. Initially treating the protestors with kid gloves on the grounds the initiative would fizzle out, they have been repeatedly reinforced – and presumably trained – by

the expert anti-protest police groups from London's Metropolitan Police.

She said: "At the beginning it was much more low key, it was a bit of a game, we did our thing, they did theirs and it has grown to be a lot more like the police are out to get us. There have been times where we've been confused by some new police tactic and it is

later discovered that they've been planning things behind the scene, like with section 14 where it became so much more serious, suddenly the police got much more aggro.

"Some of them are the same ones who are nice and have gotten nastier but they've also brought people in specially. They do seem to devote quite a lot of energy and planning into the protests. PC Shaun MacDonald is a very familiar face. He's technically events liason where he's supposed to have a chat and work things out but he's clearly got more of an intelligence gathering role now than when he started. He gets paid to sit in the back of court cases taking notes about what goes on for example."

There has been no significant letup from the facility's new owners ITT either, as far as Jane can see, though new tactics have also been absent: "They've kept their cards fairly close to their chest. As they were taking over the second factory was closed, at the end of last year and since then I don't think we've seen any definite change in tactics. They don't seem to have decided to throw money at it but they might be plotting behind the scenes."

The campaign meanwhile is set to continue into the foreseeable future. "Overall the general population have been supportive. There's always people who will complain but a lot of people have got involved from just being picked up from street demonstrations or leafleting.

"It's really been the persistence of the campaign which seems to have had some successes and we're quite hopeful of eventually having the real success of shutting EDO down. Some people really did get stuck in for the long run but it's new people coming in with new ideas as well. It's local and consistent and keeps on doing new things."

Rob Ray

A national march has been organised to take place on 15th October calling for closure of the plant, for more information go to smashedo.org.uk or call 07795 4611018.



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Welcome to the first collective issue since we came off our break. As is often the case we've picked up a couple of new writers with weeler taking on the international section, a new reviews editor and in general a reinforced lineup which should make us a bit more stable over the next few months.

In our attempts to move the bookshop, prep is been the most difficult part, including filling in the concrete channels in the floor (a remnant of the days when the old printing presses were downstairs), repairing the fire damage, cleaning years of dirt and grime from the nooks and crannies, and some lovely old brickwork has now been exposed.

The boiler has been fixed just in time for winter and we now have hot water on the ground floor – but alas not a sink as yet. The bookshop seems to be doing quite well, although there is still a bit of chaos, and we've gotten rid of most of the books we wanted to get rid of.

A quick correction: Nick Heath would like us to say that his Kater biography contained a few minor errors and omissions, saying that it comes from libcom.org originally, that Kater was more than a trade unionist, being first an SPD militant, and then advocate of anarcho-syndicalism and active anarchist propagandist. Also the Jungen were referred to as the "Berliner Jungen" when the movement was not just in Berlin. Apologies for that Nick.

Rob Ray

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 11th October 2008 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 2nd October. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to The Editors, Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

As I sit down to write this, the US government's latest intervention in the financial crisis appears to have placated the markets, though there's no way of telling for how long.

The US Treasury has basically decided to bail out the banks for their exposure to dodgy loans, with some sort of nationalised 'bad bank'. The 'bad bank' will take on all the sub-prime loans sold by the banks to people who never had any chance of paying them back. This is similar to the British government's involvement with Northern Rock and the merger of HBOS and Lloyds TSB as well as the US propping up Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, Bear Stearns and AIG. It shows that the State is ever ready to act as the final guarantor of capitalism – the risks and costs have been socialised, but there is no sign of that happening to any of the profits.

This is important – the crisis in finance capitalism is one that will affect all of us, whether we like it or not (and I certainly don't!). The government will tell us regularly that uneconomic industries must go to the wall if they can't pay their way, and has indeed let this happen to quite a few, such as Rover and Farepak. Oddly enough, once it is a business that involves those wizards of finance, the government bail them out once they get into difficulty. The logic of such bailouts is unavoidable from the government's point of view – they can hardly let the institutions that are vital to the continuance of capitalism fail. However, there are obvious effects for the rest of us... the bail-outs have

to be paid for.

It would be nice to imagine that such bail-outs are financed through some sort of voluntary levy among bankers and hedge-fund managers in the City, but the reality is that it will be paid by cuts in services for us. When the NHS is cut, or local services trimmed in the next few months, chances are this will be a direct result of the State transferring that expenditure to the bail-out of the financial sector. It would be a little easier to bear if other industries under threat could count on similar bail-outs, but don't hold your breath. In a further twist, those who most benefited from the dodgy practices that the banks have been indulging in pay hardly any tax; their incomes are managed in such a way as to minimise their tax bill – and it's all perfectly legal.

To judge from a lot of people's initial reactions to the financial crisis, there's not a lot of sympathy for the bankers. Even bulletin boards that are normally fairly placid have suggested that those responsible should be strung up from lamp-posts. Of more importance, this crisis shows just how thin the façade of capitalism is. It demands no regulation and the ability to do what it likes in good times, but falls back on corporate welfare the minute that times are bad. The State is not some sort of neutral player in this, but crucial to the survival of capitalism.

I have no illusions that we are about to socialise the benefits as well as the costs, but now is at least a good time to raise the idea that we should.

Blog Bites

(from anarchismtoday.org/blogs)

Note: In this blog by 'personman' he is talking about US-style democracy.

Democracy ... we are taught it's this wonderful thing in school. In my mind, a simple definition of a genuine democracy, would be something like 'the idea, or a system based on the idea, that the people of a given society, should have meaningful control over the decisions that are made in that society'. Seems simple enough right? Now take this same basic premise, and apply it to economics... You have just become a communist...

James Madison, considered one of the founding fathers, and the original framer of the constitution, knew perfectly well that genuine democracy would lead to communism.

"The government we mean to erect is intended to last for ages. The landed interest, at present, is prevalent; but in process of time, when we approximate to the states and kingdoms of Europe – when the number of landholders shall be comparatively small, through the various means of trade and manufactures, will not the landed interest be

overbalanced in future elections, and unless wisely provided against, what will become of your government?

"In England, at this day, if elections were open to all classes of people, the property of landed proprietors would be insecure. An agrarian law would soon take place. If these observations be just, our government ought to secure the permanent interests of the country against innovation. Landholders ought to have a share in the government, to support these invaluable interests, and to balance and check the other. They ought to be so constituted as to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority. The senate, therefore, ought to be this body; and to answer these purposes, they ought to have permanency and stability."

To summarise, in a democracy, once the capitalists have monopolised most property and cannibalised each other down to a small elite: 'the minority of the opulent', the majority would then enact laws to redistribute property more evenly. This could not be allowed.

NHS pay no surprise

It is no surprise to me that the NHS pay award has been shoved through (*Freedom*, 30th August). Unison negotiators put quite a spin on it, all documents sent to members and stewards were at pains to point out all the minor increases the finer details involved. There was only one sentence in all the many documents pointing out it was a below inflation award that did not meet the health group objectives.

Turn out in the Unison ballot was a measly 17%, I don't even know anyone that voted! Apathy rules, the Unison leadership knows it as do NHS Employers. As Unison has more members in the NHS than all the other unions on the Staff council it was ultimately only Unison votes that really counted! Some members like the GMB voted 90% against, the Royal College of Midwives recommended rejection, I have been unable to get figures for all the other groups there are around a dozen of them.

In real terms the award is only an extra £60-£80 per month for many (before tax), slightly more for some but they are on low wages already (£13,000-£16,000pa). Well done to those branches who organised against it!

Mike Gribbens

Bad boys

If mad bad boy Gibson has done nothing else he has rehabilitated the sociobiologists. They are now the good guys who, according to Iain McKay (*Freedom*, 21st June), are the defenders of altruism, cooperation and society. I am not sure they would recognise themselves. But the selfish gene theory would now appear to be all very acceptable as long as it is kept out of politics.

The now good sociobiologists such as Dawkins have prestigious and well paid university posts and the one thing they do

Blog bites

« page 10

Sharing... that's another thing we are taught is just great in kindergarten, or nursery school, but talk to a kid from a business family who goes to a private school sometime about it.

Though they use knowledge and language and resources built up by the base of human civilisation, stepping their way up on the heads of others, they suddenly become complete individuals when it comes to 'picking up the tab'.

Here in the west where we just love 'our' property rights, (if by 'our' you mean the 10% of people who own 80% of all wealth). If you don't happen to have wealthy parents, this sub-moronic take on freedom just doesn't seem to go away. It is the doctrine of the business class. It's nothing to do with liberty or freedom.

not want is to be mistaken for anarchists. The rehabilitated sociobiologists must not meddle in how we all actually behave. They must go along with standard social science dogma which is what most people and in particular anarchists such as Iain, want to believe. This is, that society is organised by thinking and reasonable people. Anarchists claim the problem is society is not organised correctly – their way – the way in which anarchists would benefit. This is the self gene showing its true colours.

If sociobiologists took their ideas seriously, rather than their jobs and their public image, they might realise that society and selfish genes are incompatible. If we had happy bunny genes this would mean that we all, in spite of mayhem in the world, really deep down, as Iain wants to believe, love each other and that aberrant capitalists are the problem. Sociobiologists and these anarchists might admit in the long dark hours of the morning that society depends on us all being selfish capitalists. The reason is that we are like all animals, we are animals. For other animals to have survived as long they have, as Stirner in effect says, they must have been concerned only with number one. 'Aha' say the rehabilitators and sociobiologists, 'life doesn't have to be that way! We are humans and different and can think and reason'. My arse, believe that and you will believe anything.

Lurking unseen are the neo-crypto-sociobiologists. These have removed their sociobiological blinkers. They say that to achieve anarchism we need to cease hiding behind the make-believe of society. Society is capitalism and capitalism is scrambling up one another's backs. The sociobiologists have a dichotomy: is the way we behave determined by the way we think or is the way we think actually determined by the way we behave? That is, is thinking determined by behaviour – genes? We need to recognise that we behave in the same way as other animals. If one is looking for a difference between us and them, it is that we gab and gab and gab. (The animals that have survived the longest have gabbled the least.) This may hurt, but all this chatter which we see as thinking is an attempt to manipulate others for our own benefit. Language is exploitative: we are not thinking, our genes are talking.

The sociobiologists have simply pointed us in a new direction and now we must run with it.

Peter Gibson

Neoliberalism, Red and Blue

Though the recent round of government intervention in the finance industry has dampened neoliberal rhetoric and exposed the state as the guarantor of capitalist class power, recent high-profile statements by government bureaucrats and their Tory

counterparts show their commitment to the deepening of the neoliberal attack on both workers and the services won by a generation of class struggle.

David Milliband, seen as the great young hope of the Labour Party, recently publicly intervened in the speculation surrounding party leadership and direction by laying out a vision for 'change' and electoral victory.

Referring to Labour's social-democratic origins, today believed in only by party and union hacks, he writes: "every member of the Labour party carries with them a simple guiding mission on the membership card: to put power, wealth and opportunity in the hands of the many, not the few".

It is clear enough that this is a red gloss on the neoliberal project of the redistribution of wealth from workers to capitalists, and the attack on the social underpinning of services, pursued under the banner of 'reform' by New Labour. A Blairite through and through, his 'power' means that of the consumer; 'opportunity' as consumer choice. This mantra of 'choice' in healthcare and education means marketisation, inevitably bringing creeping privatisation, as we have seen in recent years.

His distribution of "more power and control to citizens over the education, health-care and social services they receive" means the deepening of these consumer-product relations, rather than those of need and service.

Similarly, the Tories dress their pro-market, antisocial ideology in egalitarian language. Speaking in Liverpool, shadow work and pensions secretary Chris Grayling laid out their plans to tackle poverty. Working out his definitions, however, shows exactly what this means.

Poverty and work are viewed as mutually exclusive – "back-to-work centres", along with more authoritarian street policing and prison rehabilitation would lead to a "return to an era where social mobility is the norm and not the exception". This means funnelling the poor into low-paid work in the service industry. A major replacement for the skilled industries destroyed by Thatcher and her successors, the service industry is also praised by Milliband as a global economic dynamo.

Labour's own poverty achievements are based around similar definitions – taking people out of absolute poverty and into relative poverty – i.e. precarious, low-paid work. They are then added to the statistics of those lifted out of poverty altogether.

Real wages have long been stagnating for the vast majority of workers. The general immiseration has been recently compounded by international food, fuel and financial crises, and the dismantling of the postwar settlement by an organised and vigorous capitalist class. In the short term, the best response for workers is to intensify their path of collective self-defense, and to vigorously pursue the civilising effects of class struggle.

Jim Longhurst

GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

Plea bargain for Marie Mason

Marie Mason, an environmental and labour activist arrested as part of the Green Scare crackdown in the US, has accepted a plea bargain which would see her accept the prosecution's contention that her ex-husband – whose testimony saw her jailed and who has already pleaded guilty – conspired with her in environmental direct actions.

Marie is currently facing life in prison as the result of the testimony of her ex-husband Frank Ambrose, who snitched following a period of cooperation with the state. Mason had previously refused an earlier plea bargain which would have required her to name a number of other people. After holding out for six months and preparing to go to trial rather than compromise other activists, this is the only option that federal authorities have offered. Because of the cooperation of her former husband Ambrose, there is no expectation that Mason would win a jury trial.

Contact freemarie@riseup.net or see freemarie.org

Sean moved

British animal rights prisoner Sean Kirtley, jailed for running a website which encouraged lawful protest, has been moved. It's Sean's birthday on 11th December and his supporters have asked people to send him a card.

• Sean Kirtley, WC 6977, HMP Stafford, 54 Gaol Road, Stafford, ST16 3AW

SF8 aim for New York parole hearing

All of the San Francisco Eight brothers were in court earlier this month. A sizeable crowd of supporters were on hand despite the brief nature of the hearing.

The former black community activists were arrested on in California, New York and Florida on charges related to the 1971 killing of a San Francisco police officer. Similar charges were thrown out after it was revealed that police used torture to extract confessions when some of these same men were arrested in New Orleans in 1973.

Richard Brown, Richard O'Neal, Ray Boudreaux, and Hank Jones were arrested in California. Francisco Torres was arrested in Queens, New York. Harold Taylor was arrested in Florida. Two men charged – Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim – have been held as political prisoners for over 30 years in New York State prisons. The men were charged with the murder of Sgt. John Young and conspiracy that encompasses numerous acts between 1968 and 1973.

Supporters are asking people to contact the Governors of California and New York to urge them to sign amended Executive Agreements which will allow Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim to return to New York State, helping their chances of getting parole.

• Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, to email go to website gov.ca.gov/interact#email
• David A. Paterson, email 161.11.121.121/govemail

The next hearing will be on 4th November and is expected to clarify a schedule for the preliminary hearing.



● Following a failed attempt to found a new social centre in Newcastle, a collective has decided to use most of the £12,500 seed money they had collected to expand the town's Star and Shadow Cinema – which put on the Projectile anarchist film festival earlier this year – with a fifth of it likely to be given to other social centre projects.

A collective member wrote: "Most of the money, we are putting into our local very-close-to-being-a-social-centre the Star and Shadow cinema, in order to help it be more like our ideal. The way we are doing this is quite specific to what energy and commitment we ourselves can put in, so for example we will be taking responsibility for useful bits of equipment that we bring into the cinema. Some of us may set up a kitchen collective of some sort, that could also extend beyond the walls of that one venue.

"A fifth of the money – £2,500 – we will give to other social centres in these islands of ours. Split evenly, that doesn't amount to very much each. Also we are not sure where the division is between a social centre and 'a bit like a social centre', and maybe there will be more social centres on the way. We are also aware that some centres might not have had chance to respond in time. So essentially, two of us will meet up in October and write some cheques to social centres who have asked for money. In deciding how much we give each, we will prioritise, to some degree, according to need as we perceive it.

"So it remains to say, if your social centre has a certain need, then emailing me at

oldglen@gmail.com is the best way to talk about it. Those who've responded already I'll chat to on separate emails."

● Following its financial crisis, brought on by a police cancellation of its liquor and entertainment licence, The Common Place in Leeds (pictured above) is considering setting up a café to help meet costs.

The CP café collective is looking to provide healthy, affordable, organic, locally produced vegan food to Leeds and is looking at ways to make the project sustainable and in keeping with the collective's ideological values.

Contact: mark@phonecoop.coop

● All six Greenpeace defendants in the Kingsnorth Six case – Kevin, Emily, Tim, Will, Ben and Huw – have been acquitted of criminal damage from their actions in climbing a large chimney on the site.

The defence was that they had 'lawful excuse' – because they were acting to protect property around the world "in immediate need of protection" from the impacts of climate change, caused in part by burning coal.

The evidence for the defence centred around the enormous damage burning coal does to ecosystems, people and property around the planet – and the UK government's abject failure to take any meaningful action.

After hearing all of the evidence, the jurors supported the right to take direct action to protect the climate from the burning of coal.

Green anarchism

Green anarchism is a school of anarchist thought which puts an emphasis on the environment. Some green anarchists can be described as anarcho-primitivists or anti-civilisation anarchists, though not all green anarchists are primitivists. Likewise, there is a strong critique of technology among some green anarchists, though not all reject it entirely. Sometimes green anarchism is said to be 'techno-positive' or 'techno-negative' to differentiate between those who advocate use of advanced green technology to create and maintain an anarchist society, and those who predominantly see civilisation and modern technology as something negative.

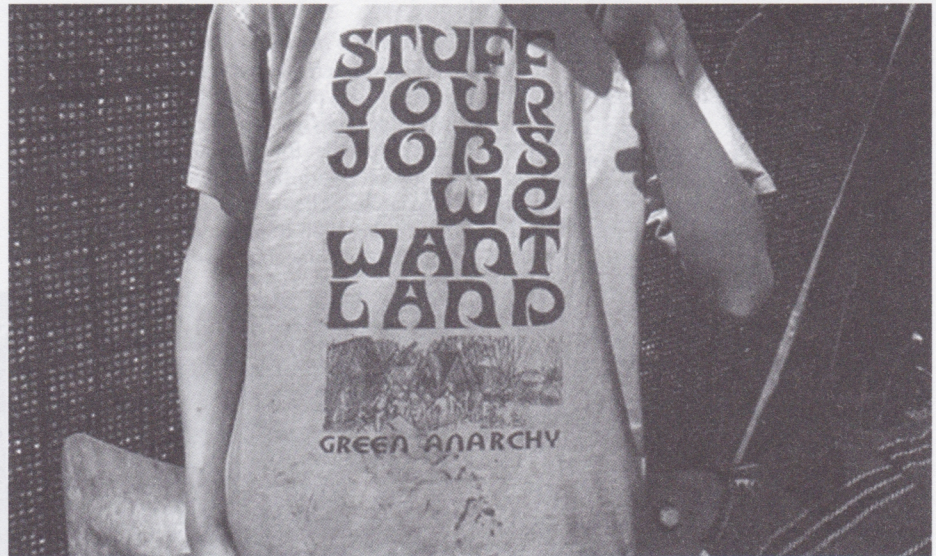
Green anarchism incorporates a set of related political theories derived from philosophical and social movements such as social ecologists, feminism, egoism, the Situationists, surrealism, the Luddites, Anarcho-primitivism, post- and anti-leftists, indigenous, anti-industrialism, and pre-civilised people.

Although green anarchism develops themes present in the political action of the Luddites and the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, when primitivism emerged it was influenced more directly by the works of theorists such as the Frankfurt School Marxists Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, anthropologists Marshall Sahlins and Richard Borshay Lee, and others such as Lewis Mumford, Jean Baudrillard and Gary Snyder. Many advocates of Green anarchism and primitivism consider the writer Fredy Perlman, author of *Against His-Story, Against Leviathan!* as the modern progenitor of their views.

Notable contemporary writers espousing green anarchism include those critical of technology such as Derrick Jensen, George Draffan, and John Zerzan, the techno-positive Murray Bookchin, and others including Alan Carter.

The green anarchist critique focuses on the institutions of domination that make up society, all grouped under the broad term 'civilisation'. Such institutions include the state, capitalism, industrialism, globalisation, domestication, patriarchy, science, technology and/or work. These institutions, according to green anarchists, are inherently destructive and exploitative both to humans and to the environment, and therefore cannot be reformed into anything better. This movement generally rejects furthering their cause through current political lines, favouring direct and autonomous action, sabotage, insurrection, bioregionalism and reconnecting with the wild to create meaningful change.

Civilisation is taken to be the totality of institutions (described above) that are responsible for the destruction of human freedom and the environment. Physically, civilisation is demarcated by the domestication of plants, animals and humans. Agriculture introduced the concept of a surplus along with



the conditions for the rise of these institutions; before agriculture, humans often lived as autonomous bands of hunter-gatherers. Essentially, hunter-gatherers are perceived to be part of human anarchist ancestry since all humans practised that mode of life for around two million years. Civilisation is often seen as more of a paradigm of systems rather than a tangible thing, and one that places human beings above and outside of the natural world. This is seen as the first step towards, and justification for, the destruction of nature, humans included.

Technology is seen as a system rather than a specific physical tool. Technology, it is argued, requires the exploitation of the environment through the creation and extraction of resources, and the exploitation of people through labour, slavery, industrialism, specialisation and the division of labour. There is no 'neutral' form of technology, as things are always created in a certain context with certain aims and functions. Green technology is often rejected as an attempt to reform this exploitative system, merely changing it on the surface to make it seem environmentally friendly, despite sustained levels of human and natural exploitation. In place of technology, green anarchists favour forms of living ranging from low use of technology to no use at all, using sustainable and local resources.

Green anarchists do not advocate a return to the stone age or the replication of hunter-gatherer lifestyles, but instead a deep questioning of the reality humans have been given, and a wish to see those questions (namely the questioning of civilisation) put into effective praxis through the creation of new communities that exist without these institutions of domination, while at the same time resisting the current ones in place.

Many green anarchists argue that small eco-villages of no more than a few hundred

people are a scale of human living preferable to civilisation, and that infrastructure and political systems should be re-organised to ensure that these are created. Green Anarchists assert that social organisations must be designed to work with natural forces, rather than against.

Many green anarchists consider traditional forms of social organisation such as the village, band, or tribe to be preferred units of human life, not for some Noble Savage concept of spiritual superiority, but because these social organisations appear to work better than civilisation. Family is considered to be more important to many green anarchists than work roles. Green anarchist philosophy can be explained as an interpretation of anthropological and biological truths, or natural laws.

Some green anarchists, identifying themselves as primitivists, advocate a process of 'rewilding' and a return to nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyles while others only wish to see an end to industrial society and do not necessarily oppose domestication or agriculture. Key theorists in the former category include Derrick Jensen and John Zerzan while the 'Unabomber' Theodore Kaczynski belongs in the latter, though the boundaries are often blurred (both Jensen and Zerzan make positive references to some forms of permaculture). Other green anarchists, mainly techno-positivists, propose other forms of organisations like arcology or technates.

Many green anarchists choose to focus not on philosophical issues for a future society, but on the defence of the earth and social revolution in the present. Resisting systems in the present, and creating alternative, sustainable ways of living are often deemed more important than frivolous protesting.

(adapted from Wikipedia)

REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON
SEPTEMBER

28th Walking tour of the gentrification of Dalston and Hackney Central, culminating with a picnic in London Fields, meet at 1pm at the Dalston Peace Mural on Dalston Lane just after the corner with Kingsland Road near Dalston Kingsland station, for more contact 07932 241737 or londoncoalitionagainstopoverty@gmail.com

OCTOBER

3rd to 4th No Borders South Wales benefit weekend of punk, ska and folk including Inner Terrestrials, KilnAboy, Tracey Curtis, Robb Johnson & The Irregulars, Spanner and many more, at TJs, 14-18 Clarence Street, Newport, Gwent NP19 0AE, see noborderswales.wordpress.com/fest

4th Keep Space for peace, protest at Menwith Hill US base near Harrogate, North Yorkshire, from 12 noon to around 5pm, see caab.org.uk and space4peace.org for details

5th An Ethical Solution to the Occupation of Iraq? talk by Mike Phipps at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL at 11am, see ethicalsoc.org.uk

11th Freedom Not Fear, international day of action against surveillance, meet at New Scotland Yard, Broadway, London SW1H 0BG at 1pm and bring stuff to make a noise, see freedom-not-fear.eu for more.

15th Smash EDO mass demo against the arms trade, meet opposite Falmer station (next to the Sussex University sign), Brighton, at 12 noon, see smashedo.org.uk/shut-itt.htm for details.

16th Amnesty International book sale from 11am until 6pm in the Brockway Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL, see conwayhall.org.uk for details

17th Benefit gig for Bristol Antifa and Bristol No Borders, with The Beggars, Restart, Rejected and Spanner, from 8pm until 2pm at The Attic, Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1, see <http://bristolantifa.org/> for details.

18th The London Anarchist Bookfair from 10am to 7pm at Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4ND

24th Bristol ABC meeting, 'Why prison abolition?' with speaker Sam Lamble, 7pm at Kebele social centre, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5, for more info see <http://bristolabc.wordpress.com>

25th Benefit gig for Bristol ABC and Bristol No Borders from 6pm until late at The Junction, 51 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1, see geocities.com/bastardsquadcollective/

25th 'Off with their heads', start of a week of talks, discussions, socials, etc., until 2nd November organised by Bristol Radical History Group, see brh.org.uk

27th Aldermaston Big Blockade, Trident Ploughshares will be upholding international law by blockading this nuclear bomb factory in what promises to be a colourful celebration of life and people power, see <http://blockawe.blogspot.com> or tridentploughshares.org for details.

BOOKS

Demanding the Impossible

by Peter Marshall
Harper Collins, £14.99

Demanding the Impossible is now the standard reference work on anarchism. A massive 700 pages of small print (plus 100 pages of notes), it is a one volume encyclopaedia. It covers an immense amount of ground, with the chapters on forerunners of anarchism being considerably less interesting than those on classic anarchist thinkers and the anarchist movements of the


nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

More recent anarchist thinkers are treated separately and a new epilogue (the book originally appeared in 1992) looks at the last few years, writers and movements.

Well-informed (the author's knowledge is breathtaking) and sympathetic, if you're only going to have one book on anarchism, then this is it.

Mo Moseley

Available from Freedom Press at £14.99 (plus £2 towards postage and packing)



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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer and philanthropist, was awarded the prize in 1922 for his work on repatriating prisoners of war. He drew up detailed plans for the "exchange of populations" between Greece and Turkey at the behest of the League of Nations, which was completed in 1924 with great suffering.
2. It was a rebel Chinese army that crossed over to Tonkin (present day Vietnam) to fight local tribes with the blessing of the Vietnamese government. They took

money from European traders and so the French invaded in 1882, but were defeated by the Army in alliance with the Chinese. It got its name from the black flags it carried decorated with the stars of the Plough.

3. Edward O. Wilson, father of sociobiology, in *On Human Nature*.
4. The Halifax Permanent Building Society, was set up in Halifax in order to build houses for workers. Later part of HBoS, soon to be part of a merged super-bank.

Hip-hop's class warrior

The new release from Immortal Technique, hip-hop's most implacable class warrior, thoroughly links local and global struggles. Tom Jennings nods his head enthusiastically

Harlem-raised after his family fled Peruvian civil war, Immortal Technique's misspent youth included incarceration for violent offences, wherein he honed his hip-hop flow before redirecting rage onto rivals, winning open-mic contests across New York and further afield. So far, so classic 'boy from the 'hood done good' – except for the parallel awakening of revolutionary class-consciousness translated into the most explicitly political rap recordings yet. From the get-go favouring precarious autonomy over commercial straitjackets – McJobs paying for studio time, handling distribution personally – *Revolutionary, Vol. 1* (2001) heralded his agenda in the 'Poverty of Philosophy':

"My revolution is born out of love for my people, not hatred for others ... As different as we have been taught to look at each other by colonial society, we are in the same struggle and until we realize that, we'll be fighting for scraps from the table of a system that has kept us subservient ... I have more in common with most working and middle-class white people than I do with most rich black and Latino people. As much as racism bleeds America, we need to understand that classism is the real issue. Many of us are in the same boat and it's sinking, while these bougie motherfuckers ride on a luxury liner, and as long as we keep fighting over kicking people out of the little boat we're all in, we're gonna miss an opportunity to gain a better standard of living as a whole ... You cannot change the past but you can make the future..."

The debut's burgeoning buzz prompted distro collaboration with independent labels for 2003's *Revolutionary, Vol. 2*. Also far exceeding sales expectations, this was swiftly followed by Viper Records' establishment to regain self-control. Apart from legendary single 'Bin Laden' (with refrain: "Bush knocked down the towers..."), Immortal Technique concentrated on consolidating talent like producer Southpaw and MC Akir, whose *Legacy* is the best hip-hop album in years.* At long last, then, a new album – *The 3rd World*, produced in mixtape fashion by Green Lantern (formerly house DJ for Eminem's Shady Records) – continues Tech's maturation, adding contemporary hip-hop styles to raucous minimalism. His vocals too have greater texture and engaging thoughtfulness than prior default tenors juggling psychotically



omnipotent bragging and sneering hectoring when dropping political science. Both doubtless suit MC-battling but can become soporifically monotonous – militating against appreciating his prodigious lyrical dexterity astutely condensing contrasting levels of analysis into each theme with ferocious wit and insurrectionary wisdom.

Globalising Ghetto centrality

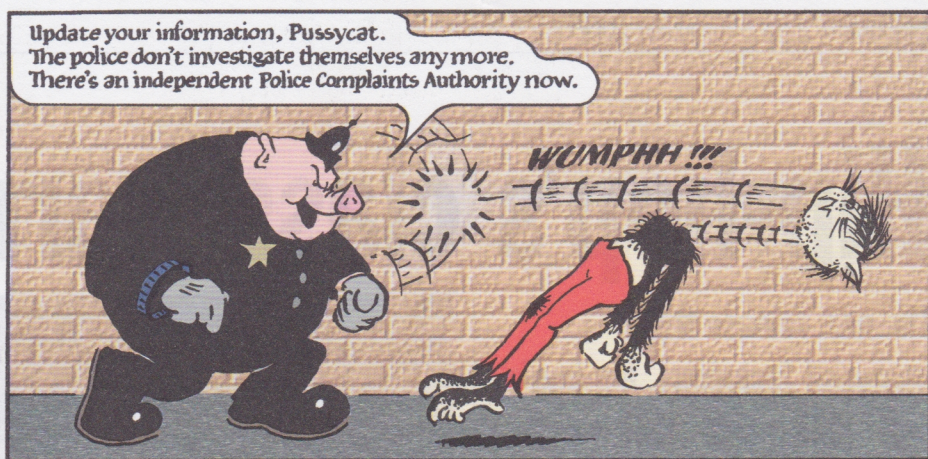
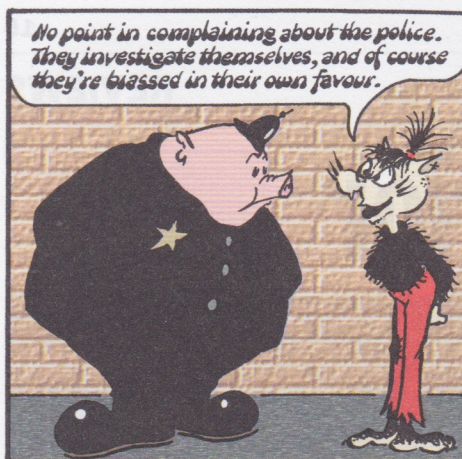
The 3rd World's concept relates "the streets here in the US to those around the world". Moreover, in terms of cultural production, "the struggles of developing countries ... are mirrored within the rap industry. In the same way that First World superpowers have continuously exploited the Third World for its natural resources, land, labor and industry, the major label superpowers have done the same" (Immortal Technique, viperrecords.com). So the intro, 'Death March', emphasises that "We are now in a state of guerrilla warfare ... through the streets of your psychology". And if the equation of commercial rap to chattel slavery stretches credulity, the multiple analogy in 'Harlem Renaissance' powerfully links US urban political-economics to world-system wars and cultural recuperations past and present:

"Harlem was once was red-light district-rated / Designated ghetto like the yellow star of David ... / Until after the invasion of gentrification / Eminent domain, intimidation – that's not negotiation ... / Ivy league real estate firms are corrupt / They lay siege to

your castle like the wars in Europe / They treat street vendors like criminal riff-raff / while politicians get the corporate kickback...

"When I speak about Harlem I speak to the world / The little Afghan boy and the Bosnian girl / The African in Sudan, the people of Kurdistan / The third world American, indigenous man / Palestinians, Washington Heights Dominicans / Displaced New Orleans citizens / Beach-front Brazilians, favelas that you living in / The 'hood is prime real estate, they want back in again ...

"I didn't write this to talk shit, I say it because / Some of ya'll forgot what the Harlem Renaissance was / We had revolution, music, and artisans / But the movement was still fucked up like Parkinson's / 'Cause while we were giving birth to the culture we love / Prejudice kept our own people out of the club / Only coloured celebrities in the party / And left us a legacy of false superiority / W.E.B. DuBois versus Marcus Garvey / And we ended up selling out to everybody / The Dutch Schultzes and the John Gottis / Banksters, modern day gangsters, immobiliari ... / Harlem Renaissance, a revolution betrayed / Modern day slaves thinking that the ghetto is saved / So they start deporting people off the property / Ethnically cleansing the 'hood economically / They want to kill the real Harlem Renaissance / Trying to put the virgin Mary through an early menopause / The saviour is a metaphor for how we set it off /



Review

◀ page 15

Guerrilla war against the lease-owning predators”.

Other tracks and guest appearances flesh out the grass-roots revolutionary stance with more depth than even Paris, The Coup and Dead Prez can manage – from the Spanish-language ‘Golpe De Estado’ (= Smash the State) through rabble-rousing anthems full of insight and intelligence. Meanwhile, several reflective cuts leave self-righteous preachiness decisively behind, including ‘Mistakes’ pondering wrong turns taken: “Some people learn from mistakes and don’t repeat them / Others try to block the memories and just delete them / But I keep them as a reminder they not killing me / And I thank God for

teaching me humility / Son, remember when you fight to be free / To see things how they are, and not how you’d like ‘em to be / ‘Cause even when the world is falling on top of me / Pessimism is an emotion, not a philosophy / Knowing what’s wrong, doesn’t imply that you right / And it’s another when you suffer, to apply it in life”. So, even as a stopgap while *The Middle Passage* and *Revolutionary*, Vol. 3 incubate, this superb album has a compelling sound and vision all its own.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

* See my review of recent radical rap in ‘Rebel Poets Reloaded’, *Variant* 30, 2007 (variant.org.uk).

The 3rd World is available on import, from Amazon or, preferably, direct from Viper at viperrecords.com

THE QUIZ

1. Which Nobel Peace Prize winner drew up a plan for ethnic cleansing?
2. What was the Black Flag Army?
3. Who proclaimed that anarchism was “biologically impossible”?
4. What was founded in an inn in West Yorkshire in 1852 by a few local worthies to help the workers?

Answers on page 14

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's arms — an interview with Smash



Above, the Carnival Against the Arms Trade marches through Brighton in June 2008; below right, a karaoke demonstration

against a number of protestors when their lawyer demanded recorded conversations between Brighton police and EDO as part of their cases.

In 2006 the tribunal was overturned, leaving EDO helpless to stop a new wave of demonstrations in which hundreds have sometimes participated – including a recent protest in which police were overwhelmed and marchers forced their way into the facility itself.

More recently, the police have been trawling any legal angle they can find to dissuade protestors. Having defeated complex injunctions, attempted charges for assault and high-tech opposition, the campaign has been running into trouble over a council bye-law aimed at curbing excessive noise.

Jane told *Freedom*: “There’s noise demos every week and fairly often at the moment the police will threaten to arrest people for making too much noise. I think there’s been four or five people arrested under it and it’s a law that was apparently designed to deal with drunk people and buskers – it generally says that you have to stop if someone finds the amount of noise you’re making too annoying.

“Paul Hills [the current managing director of EDO in Brighton] is often the one that complains and then they can come and ask people to stop. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don’t, so sometimes they get arrested.

“In the court cases so far the council was asked if they originally saw the law being used in this way and they said that it wasn’t and it wasn’t what they meant by it. Even the wording doesn’t really make sense and there’s nothing written into it to take account of human rights law.

“One thing that was kind of criticised in terms of using human rights law though, it was pointed out in court that it’s noise as opposed to expressing a political opinion. So there was a protest songs demo and people got anti-war songs and put them on a sound system – someone still got nicked!

“When he said they were anti-war songs the police said they couldn’t hear the words.”

Jane thinks policing in Brighton has changed significantly since the Smash EDO campaign got underway. Initially treating the protestors with kid gloves on the grounds the initiative would fizzle out, they have been repeatedly reinforced – and presumably trained – by

the expert anti-protest police groups from London’s Metropolitan Police.

She said: “At the beginning it was much more low key, it was a bit of a game, we did our thing, they did theirs and it has grown to be a lot more like the police are out to get us. There have been times where we’ve been confused by some new police tactic and it is



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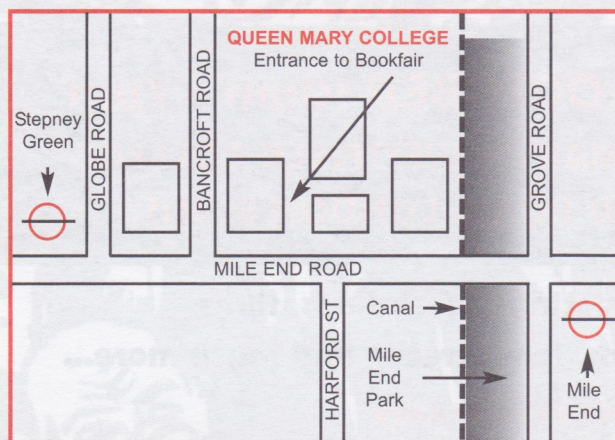


This year we are reminded that 1968 was the year of revolutions. But working class people had fought the state and the bosses for centuries before and we didn't stop fighting in 1969. Resistance continues today.

Anarchism is anti-authoritarian class struggle resistance to the state and capitalism. All over the world ordinary people are organising together, without the need for leaders, to fight against the forces that threaten us; in our workplaces, on our streets, across the planet. It's simple practical everyday commonsense. Anyone can see the need to resist the destruction of the planet, the imposition of poverty and the theft of resources. Anarchist politics is simply one expression of how we resist.

Every year the London Anarchist Bookfair brings together anarchist groups and revolutionaries from all over the country and beyond. It's a chance to spread ideas and discussion, to promote action and resistance. It's a place to meet likeminded people, to find out more about Anarchist politics and Anti-Authoritarian action.

This year we are back in East London with more space and more going on. Stalls, films and meetings show how anarchists are working for a better world. Yes there's history too, but as inspiration or lessons for today's fights, not as nostalgia.



Anarchist Bookfair 2008

Venue: Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS. Please note that the whole venue including the grounds is no smoking.

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